

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE**  
**CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD**  
**Connecticut/Rhode Island**  
**ANIMAL TRAILS AND WALKWAYS**  
**(Feet)**  
**Code 575**

**DEFINITION**

A travel facility for livestock and/or wildlife to provide movement through difficult or ecologically sensitive terrain.

**PURPOSE**

This practice may be applied as part of a conservation management system to accomplish one or more of the following purposes:

1. Provide or improve access to forage, water, and/or shelter.
2. Improve grazing efficiency and distribution.
3. Divert travel away from ecologically sensitive and/or erosive sites.

**CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES**

In transit to or on pasture lands where animal movement is impeded or restricted such as, laneways, steep rough terrain, across rock outcrops, through dense forest or brush, on pastured wetlands, and grazing lands susceptible to periodic flooding.

**CRITERIA**

**General Criteria Applicable For All The Purposes Stated Above.**

Trails or walkways shall be constructed wide enough to accommodate movement of livestock and access by the operator. Minimum width shall be eight feet.

Trails or walkways shall be constructed in such a manner that accelerated erosion will not occur. Where necessary, surface diversions or subsurface drainage will be provided.

Trails or walkways seeded or planted to vegetative cover shall be protected from grazing until planting material is fully established and capable of withstanding grazing and/or trampling.

**Criteria Applicable For Animal Walkways**

Hydraulics: Animal walkways which traverse natural watercourses or swales shall either be designed with culverts with a minimum capacity for passage of a two-year storm before overtopping the walkway, or by installation of a stabilized ford. Culverts and fords shall be installed so as not to significantly impact fish migration. When animal walkways cross a designed diversion, the culvert capacity shall have at least the same capacity as the diversion prior to overtopping the walkway.

Fencing: Fencing or similar barriers shall be installed at stream crossings to minimize animal impact.

Soil Mechanics and Surface Treatment:

Finished surfaces of animal walkways may be vegetative or non-vegetative consisting of free-draining well-graded sand or gravel. In wetland areas or where weak bearing capacity soils are encountered, such as organics, silts and clays, a surface treatment of sand and gravel may need to be underlain with a geotextile specifically designed for road

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stabilization applications. In areas where fords are used, either traditional channel linings, cellular geocomposites, turf reinforcement mats or other stabilizing measures shall be installed.

## **CONSIDERATIONS**

Other practices that facilitate grazing distribution and proper intensity such as prescribed grazing should be implemented along with this practice.

## **PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS**

Each trail or walkway shall have a site specific design based on the criteria in this standard.

## **OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE**

Operation shall consist of periodic grading, top dressing, or shaping on trails and walkways to maintain designed dimensions. Maintenance shall consist of repair that may be needed following major storm events such as high runoff events or other occurrences that cause damage and interfere with normal operation.

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